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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE

Child Nutrition Programs
Farm to School Grant Program

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

CFDA#: 10.575

PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPORT SERVICE GRANT APPLICATION
SUBMISSION DATE:

11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET), April 30, 2014

CONFERENCE/EVENT GRANT LETTER OF INTENT SUBMISSION DATE:

11:59 PM Eastern Time (ET), April 2, 2014

STAKEHOLDER INPUT: The U.S. Department of Agriculture seeks your comments about this request for application (RFA). We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the Farm to School Grant Program. Submit written stakeholder comments via e-mail to: farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov. In your comments, please state that you are responding to the fiscal year (FY) 2015 Farm to School Grant Program RFA. The deadline for feedback is 11:59 PM ET on **May 14, 2014** and additional information is noted in section VIII: Important Dates and Award Periods.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (HHFKA) amended Section 18 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (NSLA) to establish a Farm to School Program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

To fulfill the farm to school mandate in the HHFKA, \$5 million is provided to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) on an annual basis to support grants, technical assistance, and the federal administrative costs related to USDA's Farm to School Program. This request for applications (RFA) provides additional details regarding the grants aspect of the USDA Farm to School Program.

The USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) is charged with implementing the Farm to School Program. In this funding cycle, USDA anticipates awarding approximately \$5 million in grant funding to support efforts that improve access to local foods in eligible schools. We also anticipate executing up to \$500,000 in grants to support farm to school conferences, trainings, and like events.

Grant funds will be made available on a competitive basis, subject to availability of federal funds. Applicants may apply for a Planning grant, Implementation grant or Support Service grant. Planning grants are expected to range from \$20,000 - \$45,000 and implementation grants and support service grants are expected to range from \$65,000 - \$100,000. It is estimated that planning grants will represent approximately 25 percent of the total grant funding awarded in this RFA, while implementation and support service grants are expected to represent approximately 75 percent.

For all three types of grants, the federal share of a project cannot exceed 75 percent of the total cost of the project, as required by the HHFKA. Therefore, the applicant must provide at least 25 percent of the costs of the *total project*. The total project cost is the federal grant request amount plus the applicant match.

New in FY2015, USDA Farm to School program funds will be made available to support conferences, trainings and events. Funding for conference/events are expected to range from \$15,000-\$50,000. No match funds are required. USDA expects to fund at least one statewide or regional conference in all seven FNS regions, and at least one national conference.

For updates about USDA's Farm to School Program, please visit the USDA [Farm to School website](#) or subscribe to the [Farm to School E-letter](#).

The purpose of this RFA is to:

- Provide background information and context related to farm to school activities at USDA;
- Describe the types of grants available;

- Describe which entities are eligible to apply for grant funds;
- Solicit applications from eligible entities;
- Describe the requirements for submitting a successful application;
- Describe how applications will be reviewed and selected; and,
- Describe the terms and conditions that grantees must adhere to.

USDA will conduct four webinars to provide training on how to submit an RFA and address questions regarding the application process. The four webinars are scheduled for:

- March 11, 2014, 1:00 p.m. EST – Planning Grants
- March 12, 2014, 1:00 p.m. EST – Implementation Grants
- March 13, 2014, 1:00 p.m. EST – Support Service Grants
- March 14, 2014, 1:00 p.m. EST – Conference / Event Grants

Notification of the webinar call-in information will be communicated via the USDA [Farm to School website](#) and the [Farm to School E-letter](#).

In addition, applicants can find a set of Frequently Asked Questions and access examples of previously successful applications online via the USDA [Farm to School website](#).

II. BACKGROUND

A. What is Farm to School?

While individual farm to school programs are shaped by their unique community, geographic region, and scope, the term ‘farm to school’ is generally understood to include efforts that connect schools with local or regional farmers, food processors and manufacturers in order to serve local or regionally procured foods in school cafeterias. Bringing more locally sourced, fresh fruits and vegetables into school cafeterias is a seminal activity of many farm to school efforts; procuring locally sourced, minimally processed main meal items so that the entire school meal is representative of regional options is also a focus of many farm to school programs. Thus, USDA considers farm to school to be inclusive of many types of producers, such as farmers, ranchers, and fishermen, as well as many types of food businesses, including food processors, manufacturers, distributors and other value-added operations.

In addition to procurement activities, farm to school programs often include food, agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts including standards-based curriculum and a whole host of hands-on experiential activities, such as school gardens, field trips to local farms, and cooking classes. For example, students might dissect vegetables in science class, run farm stands using school garden produce to learn business skills, or practice data visualization techniques using plant growth measurements, all contributing to a holistic approach to learning centered on food, agriculture and nutrition. To embed farm to school activities into school culture, promotional and outreach efforts often aim to keep farm to school activities front and center in both the school and broader community.

As the potential impact of farm to school programs is significant, sophisticated evaluation and impact assessments are routinely used to monitor progress toward goals. Ultimately, farm to

school programs are believed to strengthen children's and communities' knowledge about, and attitudes toward, agriculture, food, nutrition and the environment; increase children's consumption of fruits and vegetables; increase market opportunities for farmers, fishers, ranchers, food processors and food manufacturers, and support economic development across numerous sectors.

B. USDA Context

In 2010, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack laid out a five-year strategic plan for USDA. One pillar of this plan was the development and support of regional food systems. He stated:

An increased emphasis on regional food systems will have direct and significant benefits to rural communities. Increased economic activity in food-related sectors of the economy helps communities build and maintain prosperity. Building on the foundation established [by Congress] in the 2008 Farm Bill, USDA will work closely with all its strategic partners... to develop and revitalize the critical infrastructure necessary for vibrant regional food systems.

Helping schools find and procure regionally produced food is directly tied to the USDA's strategic plan and a key component of the USDA [Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food](#) (KYF) initiative.

For more information on USDA's many farm to school initiatives, or to access resources associated with farm to school, please visit USDA's [Farm to School website](#) or see the additional background information shared in the Appendix.

C. A Vision for Health and Economic Opportunity

In addition to being a key priority for USDA, farm to school activities also align with broader Administration efforts – most notably First Lady Michelle Obama's [Let's Move](#) Initiative – to increase healthy food options in schools.

In USDA's vision, school cafeterias championing U.S. agriculture and proudly promoting regionally sourced foods that meet or exceed school nutrition standards are the norm, not the exception. Regional offerings, and therefore economic opportunities for U.S. food producers, span the school meal tray and include everything from the salad bar and fresh fruit and vegetable servings to the wheat in the pizza crust, beans in the chili, rice in the stir fry, turkey in the sandwiches, and cheese in the quesadillas. As routinely requested in bid specifications as the requirement to adhere to nutrition standards, activities related to sourcing regional foods are integrated into everyday workflows.

USDA fully recognizes that the vision described above is most likely to be achieved when food, agriculture and nutrition-based educational efforts are also part of a school's daily rhythm. Thus, we view regional procurement activities as integrated with complementary efforts to encourage healthy eating behaviors. Ultimately, we expect dual health and wellness and economic prosperity impacts, where food literate children graduate empowered to make life-long healthy eating choices and the U.S. school cafeteria represents a consistently reliable market for U.S. agricultural producers.

Consistent with the authorizing language referenced below, to achieve these outcomes, with this RFA, USDA intends to strategically invest in a wide variety of farm to school initiatives that improve access to local and regional foods in eligible schools.

Defining local foods. Local and regional food systems typically centralize within a specific region all of the activities associated with producing, processing, distributing and marketing foods. How one defines “local” or “regional” – which are often used interchangeably, and will be for the purposes of this request for applications – can depend on geographic, social, governmental, physical, or economic parameters; seasonality; or other factors.

For the purpose of the school meal programs, and therefore this RFA, as defined in the Final Rule, Federal Register Vol. 76, No. 78, [Geographic Preference for the Procurement of Unprocessed Agricultural Products in Child Nutrition Programs](#), published on April 22, 2011, a school district participating in the Child Nutrition Programs, as well as state agencies making purchases on behalf of such a school district, “may apply a geographic preference when procuring unprocessed locally grown or locally raised agricultural products. When utilizing the geographic preference to procure such products, the School Food Authority making the purchase, or the state agency making purchases on behalf of such school food authorities, have the discretion to determine the local area to which the geographic preference option will be applied.” USDA fully expects applicants of this RFA to have varying definitions of “local” specific to their individual contexts.

III. AUTHORITY AND PURPOSE OF GRANT FUNDING

As noted above, the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 amended Section 18 of the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act to establish a Farm to School Program in order to assist eligible entities, through grants and technical assistance, in implementing farm to school programs that improve access to local foods in eligible schools.

Further, authorizing language in the HHFKA directed the Secretary of Agriculture to award competitive grants for:

- (i) Training;
- (ii) Supporting operations;
- (iii) Planning;
- (iv) Purchasing equipment;
- (v) Developing school gardens;
- (vi) Developing partnerships; and,
- (vii) Implementing farm to school programs.

The Secretary of Agriculture was also directed through the HHFKA to ensure geographical diversity and equitable treatment of urban, rural and tribal communities, as well as give the highest priority to funding projects that, as determined by the Secretary –

- (a) Make local food products available on the menu of the eligible school;
- (b) Serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price lunches;

- (c) Incorporate experiential nutrition education activities in curriculum planning that encourage the participation of school children in farm and garden-based activities;
- (d) Demonstrate collaboration between eligible schools, nongovernmental and community-based organizations, agricultural producer groups, and other community partners;
- (e) Include adequate and participatory evaluation plans;
- (f) Demonstrate the potential for long-term program sustainability; and,
- (g) Meet any other criteria that the Secretary determines appropriate.

Authorizing language also states that as a condition of receiving a USDA Farm to School Program Grant, each grant recipient shall provide matching support in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, and agree to cooperate in an evaluation of the program carried out using grant funds.

In concordance with this directive, in this funding round, USDA is soliciting applications for three types of grants and collecting letters of intent for conferences and events:

1. **Planning grants** are for schools or school districts just getting started on farm to school activities and are intended to help these entities organize and structure their efforts for maximum impact by embedding known best practices into early design considerations.
2. **Implementation grants** are intended to help schools or school districts to help scale or further develop existing farm to school initiatives.
3. **Support Service grants** are intended for state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities working with schools or school districts to further develop and provide broad reaching support services to farm to school initiatives.
4. **Conference and Event grants** are open to all interested parties. They are intended to support conferences, events and trainings that strengthen farm to school supply chains, or conferences, events and trainings that provide technical assistance in the area of local procurement, food safety, culinary education and integration of agriculture-based curriculum. (NEW in FY2015)

See IV: Eligibility Requirements and VI: Distribution of Awards.

IV. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

A. Eligible Entities

Authorizing language specifies the following eligible entities:

- Eligible schools;
- State and local agencies;
- Indian tribal organizations;
- Agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers; and,
- Non-profit entities.

Eligible Schools Defined

Funding is intended only for projects that will ultimately benefit K-12 students from eligible schools. Thus, for the purposes of this RFA, with a few exceptions noted below, eligible schools are considered K-12 school food authorities (SFAs) that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs.

K-12 non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs, but are not associated with an SFA, are also eligible to apply.

Eligible SFAs may apply for funding that spans the entire SFA, for a specific group of schools (e.g., only K-5 schools within an SFA), or for an individual school. In the case where an SFA exists, the application must come from the SFA and only one application per SFA is allowed.

Planning grants: Eligible entities

Only K-12 SFAs, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs are eligible to receive planning grants.

Implementation grants: Eligible entities

Only K-12 SFAs, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs are eligible to receive implementation grants.

Support Service grants: Eligible entities

Only state and local agencies, Indian tribal organizations, agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers, and non-profit entities are eligible to receive support service grants.

Conference and Event grants: Eligible entities

Conference/event grants are available to all interested parties, including but not limited to universities, including cooperative extension; non-profit organizations; state and local agencies; Indian tribal organizations; agricultural producers or groups of agricultural producers; non-profit entities; and small business or consulting groups.

B. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Planning, Implementation and Support Service Grants

K-12 only: At this time, funding is not available for farm to school initiatives focused on pre-K environments or for providers participating exclusively in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP). For this RFA, funding is intended only for those projects that will ultimately benefit children in grades K-12 served through the National School Lunch and Breakfast Programs. Operating a pre-K program does not disqualify an eligible school or school district; however, grant funds cannot be used to support pre-K farm to school activities.

One grant application per entity: Only one grant application per eligible entity is permitted. Applicants must choose between submitting a planning grant request, implementation grant request or support service grant request, and in either case, may only submit one application.

Note: An applicant may submit a letter of intent for a conference/event grant in addition to applying for one of the above grant types; however, an applicant can only submit one letter of intent for a conference/event grant.

C. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Implementation Grants

Proof of existing community support: In order to be deemed eligible, applicants must show evidence of existing community support and engagement via no less than three letters of support. (See Section IX Grant Application: What to Include.) Applicants that can demonstrate funded collaborations, where a USDA investment would be additive or readily leveraged, are preferred. Evidence of supply chain partnerships with regional producers, processors, manufacturers or distributors is also strongly encouraged. Applications which do not include at least three letters of support may be deemed ineligible.

D. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Support Service Grants

Proof of existing community support: In order to be deemed eligible, applicants must show evidence of existing community support and engagement via no less than three letters of support. (See Section IX Grant Application: What to Include.) Applicants that can demonstrate funded collaborations, where a USDA investment would be additive or readily leveraged, are preferred. Evidence of *school partnerships* and supply chain partnerships with regional producers, processors, manufacturers or distributors is also strongly encouraged. Applications which do not include at least three letters of support may be deemed ineligible.

E. Additional Eligibility Requirements: Conference/Event Grants

FNS will request applicants of selected projects to submit a full proposal including, but not limited to, a SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL. In addition, the applicant will be required to submit a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM.

V. TYPES OF GRANTS

A. Planning Grants

Planning grants will be awarded to school districts or schools that can demonstrate support and excitement for starting a farm to school program, but have undertaken few farm to school activities. Over the course of the grant year, planning grantees will participate in a robust training and technical assistance program led by USDA staff intended to help them organize and structure their farm to school efforts for maximum impact by embedding known best practices into early design considerations. Schools and districts that have moved beyond the earliest stages of farm to school planning are encouraged to apply for an implementation grant. The procurement of local foods for service in the Federal Child Nutrition Program is a priority for USDA; therefore, applications that emphasize procurement are preferred.

Recipients of planning grants must complete a comprehensive Farm to School Implementation Plan, the submission of which will be required in final reporting documents. To assist recipients in the development of a Farm to School Implementation Plan, a Farm to School Planning Toolkit and corresponding technical assistance will be provided by USDA staff. To see an example of one of the planning modules in the Farm to School Planning Toolkit, see Appendix 5.

Activities supported by planning grants include, but are not limited to:

- Assess the school district or school's need and readiness for development of a farm to school program, and determine the tools, training and technical assistance needed to create a farm to school program;
- Identify obstacles and begin to explore options for addressing existing barriers;
- Align the farm to school plan with the school district or school's existing goals and commitments; integrate farm to school concepts in wellness policies or school board resolutions, and identify key internal allies;
- Engage a wide variety of internal and external collaborators in the design of a Farm to School Implementation Plan;
- Host stakeholder meetings, conduct trainings, attend professional development conferences and seminars;
- Conduct menu audits to determine reasonable first or intermediate steps school districts or schools can take to offer local or regionally sourced foods;
- Assess local or regional product availability and identify key supply chain relationships necessary for successful implementation of a farm to school program; and,
- Develop a final Farm to School Implementation Plan that includes goals, specific activities, and timelines for implementation and responsible parties for each activity. (This is a required activity for all awarded planning grants, and applicants should budget ample staff time for its completion.)

Budget expenses are expected to include, but not be limited to, expenses related to personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings.

Applicants that reasonably expect kitchen upgrades or supply purchases will inevitably be called for in their planning processes, or be necessary to test preliminary program designs, may include expenditures for equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more such as walk-in freezers, processors, coolers, or ovens) and/or supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, and food processors). Salad bars are also an allowable expense.

No more than 10% of the grant funds may be used for food purchases. The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on school menus; however, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. Food purchases should be limited to educational purposes, including: farm to school sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting a test run of a new local or regional product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds. Seeds, bulbs, or other starter plants used for the purposes of constructing a garden are not considered a food purchase.

Planning grant amounts are to be a minimum of \$20,000 and shall not exceed \$45,000; however, total project costs (including the non-USDA portion) may exceed these amounts. Funding of applications will be provided through the grant award/letter of credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by USDA, upon receipt of a properly executed grant agreement and subject to the availability of funding. USDA expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

All planning grant activities must be completed in one year. Applicants should expect the grant life cycle to include stand up activities, execution, and close out activities (i.e., final financial and program reports, submission of an implementation plan, accounting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly in order to achieve project deliverables within the grant period specified.

Cooperative Agreements: These awards will be executed via cooperative agreements so that USDA may actively participate with and learn from awardees as they design model programs. Specific details regarding USDA's engagement will be included in the cooperative agreement terms and conditions at the time of grant execution.

Partnership: A key component of the planning process, and therefore the planning grant, will involve identifying partners and solidifying partner relationships; therefore, applicants are not required to show evidence of existing partnerships.

Individual Submission and Multi-district Submission: As noted above, planning grants will be awarded to K-12 SFAs, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs. In addition to individual submissions, USDA will consider submissions where a USDA investment might impact multiple districts and thus a broader geographic range than any one district might cover. This could take the form of a multi-district submission with one lead district that is collaborating with multiple districts to conduct a comprehensive regional or multi-district planning process. In this case, the lead district is the one that submits the proposal.

Regardless of whether the application is an individual or multi-district submission, in order to maximize the overall impact of the grant program, submissions that reach more than one school are preferred.

Planning grant recipients will be required to:

- Use USDA's Farm to School Planning Toolkit, and collaborate with USDA personnel and/or USDA training and technical assistance preferred providers in creating their Farm to School Implementation Plan.
- Participate in an orientation call, monthly webinars, and regularly scheduled training and technical assistance throughout the course of the grant period.
- Engage in periodic one-on-one consultations with USDA personnel in creating their Farm to School Implementation Plan.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, possibly timed to coincide with a national conference that provides exposure to farm to school best practices and networking

opportunities. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting will be to discuss project progress, explore opportunities for collaborative efforts, and enhance dissemination of exemplary methods. (Applicants must include travel costs for at least one project representative, preferably the project director, in their grant budgets to attend this meeting. Applicants should estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc.)

- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

In addition, planning grant recipients *may* be asked to host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. (All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.) Site visits serve to augment USDA's understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

B. Implementation Grants

Implementation grants are intended for school districts or schools that are already operating farm to school programs where partnerships are established and early successes have accrued. Further, it is expected that applicants will be well on their way to executing fully integrated programs, where cafeteria changes are supported and reinforced throughout the school learning environment (e.g. in school gardens, through food, agriculture and nutrition-based curriculum integration, and via promotional and educational initiatives that attempt to reach the school community, broadly defined, among many other activities).

Applicants must show proof of existing community support and partnerships by including at least three (3) letters of support with their application. Applicants that can demonstrate funded collaborations, where a USDA investment would be additive or readily leveraged, are preferred. Evidence of supply chain partnerships with regional producers, processors, manufacturers or distributors is also strongly encouraged. Applications that do not include at least three (3) letters of support may be deemed ineligible.

School applicants are encouraged to show evidence that farm to school planning, or, in its absence, substantive farm to school program success, has already taken place. While being a past planning grant recipient does not guarantee an implementation award, FY2013 Planning Grantees are encouraged to apply

Projects that include a focus on innovative procurement strategies are preferred.

Activities supported by implementation grants may include, but are not limited to:

- Bringing more value-added, minimally processed, regionally sourced meal components into the cafeteria;
- Solving distribution bottlenecks that limit the feasibility of sourcing more regionally produced items;
- Augmenting local food offerings by canning, freezing, storing or otherwise processing seasonal items for later use;
- Expanding farm to school programs beyond lunch to bring local or regional products into breakfast, snack, afterschool or dinner programs;

- Forming a buying group with other districts to increase purchasing power related to local foods;
- Conducting training of food services staff to augment skills related to food prep, safe handling and storing, etc.;
- Establishing new or strengthening existing community partnerships (e.g. working with culinary schools on training or menu development; partnerships with extension personnel to identify appropriate suppliers, etc.);
- Encouraging increased consumption of fruits and vegetables through promotional activities, taste tests, and other activities;
- Expanding experiential or agriculture-based learning opportunities, such as creation of school gardens, support to agriculture or food clubs, or increased exposure to on-farm activities;
- Developing integrated curriculum to reinforce food and nutrition-based learning throughout the school environment;
- Creating communications and outreach efforts that promote cafeteria changes and increase participation rates; and,
- Strategic planning efforts to expand or coordinate efforts across multiple districts.

Budget expenses are expected to include, but not be limited to, expenses related to personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings. Note that expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more such as walk-in freezers, vehicles, coolers, or ovens) and supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, and food processors) are allowable expenses for the implementation grants. Salad bars are also an allowable expense.

While projects focused on innovative procurement practices are encouraged, no more than 10% of the grant funds may be used for food purchases. The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on school menus; however, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. Food purchases should be limited to educational purposes, including: farm to school sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting a test run of a new local or regional product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds. Seeds, bulbs, or other starter plants used for the purposes of constructing a garden are not considered a food purchase.

Implementation grant amounts are to be a minimum of \$65,000 and shall not exceed \$100,000; however, total project costs (including the non-USDA portion) may exceed these amounts. Funding of applications will be provided through the grant award/letter of credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by USDA, upon receipt of a properly executed grant agreement and subject to the availability of funding. USDA expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

Implementation grants may range from 1-2 years, depending on the project proposed. Applicants should expect the grant life cycle to include stand up activities, execution, and close out activities (final financial and program reports, accounting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly in order to achieve project deliverables within the grant period specified.

Partnerships: As noted above, applicants will be required to show proof of existing partnerships via letters of support (See Section IX: What to Include). Letters of support must be submitted on letterhead.

Partners essential to the proposed project that may require funding from USDA to participate in the proposed project can be included in a school application as a subgrantee or line item contractor. Alternatively, eligible community partners may submit a separate application for funding in the Support Service grant category referenced in this RFA.

Individual Submission and Multi-district Submission: As noted above, implementation grants will be awarded to K-12 SFA's, non-profit private schools, charter schools, Indian tribal schools, and others that participate in the National School Lunch or Breakfast Programs. In addition to individual submissions, USDA will consider submissions where a USDA investment might impact multiple districts and thus a broader geographic range than any one district might cover. This could take the form of a multi-district submission with one lead district that is collaborating with multiple districts to conduct a comprehensive regional or multi-district project. In this case, the lead district is the one that submits the proposal.

Regardless of whether the application is an individual or multi-district submission, in order to maximize the overall impact of the grant program, submissions that reach more than one school are preferred.

Implementation grant recipients will be required to:

- Participate in an orientation webinar and periodic webinars throughout the course of the Implementation grant.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, possibly timed to coincide with a national conference that provides exposure to farm to school best practices and networking opportunities. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting will be to discuss project progress, explore opportunities for collaborative efforts, and enhance dissemination of exemplary methods. (Applicants must include travel costs for at least one project representative, preferably the project director, in their grant budgets to attend this meeting. Applicants should estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc.)
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

In addition, implementation grant recipients *may* be asked to host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. (All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.) Site visits serve to augment USDA's understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

C. Support Service Grants

Support service grants are intended for entities providing products or services to schools and/or agricultural producers to aid in the development or expansion of farm to school activities. Applicants in the support service grant category may focus on a relatively discrete set of schools

as direct recipients of project activities, or may provide products and services that have national, regional, or statewide relevance and scope.

As such, the activities that might be proposed by applicants in the support service category are expected to be varied and might span training and technical assistance, supply-chain development, evaluation activities, curriculum development, creation of promotional materials or campaigns, and formation of networks or coalitions, among other activities. Support service proposals must be responsive to the Farm to School Grant Program goals as described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.

Applicants must show proof of existing community support and partnerships by including at least three (3) letters of support with their application. Applicants are strongly encouraged to include letters of support from K-12 school partners that participate in the National School Lunch Program or Breakfast Program. This is intended to ensure school districts are vested partners in and/or ready markets for any farm to school activities funded through this solicitation request.

Activities supported by support service grants may include, but are not limited to:

- Aggregating local food supply to more effectively meet the needs of school districts;
- Readyng producers to participate in the school food market by providing Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) and other food safety training;
- Testing products or conducting school food market feasibility analyses;
- Developing new local food products or formulations to meet the needs of schools;
- Improving infrastructure to accommodate new ingredients or menu items;
- Forming statewide or regional networks or coalitions of varying kinds;
- Providing technical support in the form of face-to-face trainings, consultations, webinars, etc.;
- Hosting networking or other meet and greet events designed to bring school food service directors in contact with regional producers, processors, manufacturers and distributors;
- Developing promotional campaigns in support of farm to school initiatives;
- Strategic planning to expand or coordinate efforts; and,
- Conducting farm to school evaluation efforts.

Budget expenses are expected to include, but not be limited to, expenses related to: personnel, contractors, equipment and supplies, meeting expenses, travel, and trainings. Note that expenditures for both equipment (i.e., items of personal property having a useful life of more than one year and a cost of \$5,000 or more such as walk-in freezers, coolers, or ovens) and supplies (e.g., knives, cutting boards, and food processors) are allowable expenses.

No more than 10% of the grant funds may be used for food purchases in the grant budget. The ultimate goal of funded projects should be to make local food products available on school menus; however, purchasing local products should not be a primary use of grant funds. Food purchases should be limited to educational purposes, including: farm to school sample tables, taste tests, or promotional use. Food costs related to conducting a test run of a new local or region product are also deemed an appropriate use of funds.

Support Service grant amounts are to be a minimum of \$65,000 and shall not exceed \$100,000. Funding of applications will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by FNS, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement and subject to the availability of funding. FNS expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

Support Service grants may range from 1 to 2 years. Applicants should expect the grant life cycle to include stand up activities, execution, and close out activities (final financial and program reports, accounting, etc.). Applicants are expected to plan accordingly in order to achieve project deliverables within the grant period selected.

Partnerships: Partners essential to the proposed project that may require funding from USDA to participate in the proposed project can be included in applicant budgets as a subgrantee or line item contractor.

Support service grant recipients will be required to:

- Participate in an orientation webinar and periodic webinars throughout the course of the Support service grant.
- Attend at least one face-to-face meeting, possibly timed to coincide with a national conference that provides exposure to farm to school best practices and networking opportunities. The purpose of the face-to-face meeting will be to discuss project progress, explore opportunities for collaborative efforts, and enhance dissemination of exemplary methods. (Applicants must include travel costs for at least one project representative, preferably the project director, in their grant budgets to attend this meeting. Applicants should estimate three full days of travel including hotel, airfare, meals, etc.)
- Complete standardized evaluation activities as determined by USDA. (See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

In addition, support service grant recipients *may* host USDA officials for a site visit during the course of their grant award. (All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.) Site visits serve to augment USDA's understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

D. Conference/Event Grants

Conference/event grants are intended to support state, regional and national conferences, events and/or trainings that have a specific emphasis on developing supply chain relationships by connecting local producers to school food buyers. USDA will also consider requests to support conferences, events and trainings that provide technical assistance or other programming in the area of local procurement, food safety, culinary education and integration of agriculture-based curriculum.

Activities supported by conference/event grants may include, but are not limited to:

- Networking events that bring together stakeholders from across the supply chain, (including producers, manufacturers, distributors, buyers, educators, etc.), e.g. statewide producer-buyer meetings designed to stimulate networking and business connections;
- Technical assistance trainings that address local procurement for Federal meal programs; proposals from trainers who attended USDA's local procurement train the trainers events in spring 2014 are preferred;
- Culinary training or educational activities, e.g. a "Junior Chef" competition where local products are incorporated into school meal programs; and,
- National, state, or regional conferences to support information sharing, networking, or the professional development of farm to school practitioners.

Budget expenses are expected to include, but not be limited to, expenses related to: personnel, contractors, supplies, meeting expenses (e.g. room rental), travel, planning and promotional activities.

Conference/event grant amounts are to be a minimum of \$15,000 and shall not exceed \$50,000.

Funding of applications will be provided through the Grant Award/Letter of Credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by FNS, upon receipt of a properly executed Grant Agreement and subject to the availability of funding. FNS expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of a letter of intent does not guarantee funding.

Events will be funded at the following levels:

- State focused project awards will range from \$15,000 to \$25,000.
- Regionally / nationally focused project awards will range from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

Note: For the purposes of the conference/event grants, 'regional' is defined as projects targeting more than one state.

Conference/event grants will be awarded for a period of one year.

Conference/event grant recipients will be required to:

- Make best faith efforts to include USDA FNS Regional Farm to School personnel in the event planning process.
- Where relevant, distribute USDA Farm to School Program fact sheets and other relevant resource materials.
- Place the USDA logo on all conference and event materials and reference USDA as a conference sponsor in all promotional materials including websites.
- Use standardized USDA evaluation questions to monitor the effectiveness of any programming.
- Submit results from all evaluations to USDA.
- Submit meeting agendas, presentations, and other conference materials to USDA.

In addition, conference/event grant recipients *may* be asked to register USDA officials for a site visit during the event. (All costs associated with the site visit will be paid for by USDA and are not expected to be included in grant budgets.) Site visits serve to augment USDA's understanding of the challenges with and best practices of farm to school efforts.

VI. MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Note: There is no match requirement for conference/event grants.

For planning, implementation and support service grants, Federal funds should constitute no more than 75 percent of the total project budget. The grant recipient must show evidence of matching support of at least 25 percent of the total budget in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, including facilities, equipment or services provided by state and local governments, nonprofit organizations, and private sources as defined in The Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). In-kind contributions are generally defined, when used as a cost share or match for a grant, as the value of goods or services provided by a third-party for the benefit of the grant program, where no funds transferred hands. These contributions cannot satisfy a cost sharing or matching requirement for this grant program if they are used towards satisfying a match requirement under any other Federal grant agreement the applicant is party to. The match contributions reflected in the grant proposal submitted must be documented, including the basis for the value determination as well as be allowable, reasonable and allocable. Applicants may not use Federal funds of any kind, including Federal food service funds, as a match for this grant program.

Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching, also codified in 2 CFR 215.23.

(http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2005/janqtr/pdf/2cfr215.23.pdf). The grantee must maintain written records to support all allowable costs which are claimed as being its contribution to participation, as well as costs paid by the Federal Government. In the event the grantee does not provide the minimum amount of cost share, as described in the budget, the Government's contribution will be reduced in proportion to the grantee's contribution.

VII. DISTRIBUTION OF AWARDS

With this RFA USDA expects to distribute approximately \$5 million in HHFKA grant funding to eligible applicants. It is estimated that planning grants will represent approximately 25 percent of the total grant funding awarded in this RFA, while implementation grants and support service grants are expected to represent approximately 75 percent.

In addition, USDA expects to distribute approximately \$500,000 in funding to support conference/event grants.

In selecting successful applicants, USDA, to the maximum extent practicable, will seek to ensure geographical diversity and equitable treatment of urban, rural, and tribal communities. Priority consideration will be given to projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals. However, based on the number, quality, and diversity of applications, the actual percentages of grant awards may be different than those noted above. Please refer to Section XII., Part. D: Selection for additional information regarding funding decisions and award determinations.

VIII. IMPORTANT DATES & AWARD PERIODS

A. Planning, Implementation and Support Service Grant Application Deadlines

The complete application for planning, implementation and support service grant funds must be uploaded to www.grants.gov on or before 11:59 PM EST on **April 30, 2014**. Applications received after the deadline date may be deemed ineligible and may not be reviewed or considered. USDA may not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. USDA will not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications for planning, implementation, or support service grants. Please see Section XI: How to Submit for specific details on the required registrations and process for submitting an application.

USDA strongly recommends timely completion and submission of applications in order to allow for adequate time to trouble shoot any issues, should they arise.

B. Conference/Event Grant Letter of Intent Deadline

A letter of intent for Conference/Event Grants must be submitted via email on or before 11:59 PM EST on **April 2, 2014**.

USDA strongly recommends timely completion and submission of applications in order to allow for adequate time to trouble shoot any issues, should they arise.

C. Planning, Implementation and Support Service Grant Award Notices

Applications selected for award will be announced, subject to availability of funds, in early FY 2015 (i.e. late October to mid-November). Funding of applications will be provided through the grant award/letter of credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by USDA, upon receipt of a properly executed grant agreement and subject to the availability of funding. USDA expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding.

D. Conference/Event Award Notices

Conference/event awards will be announced, subject to the availability of funds, in FY2014. Funding of applications will be provided through the grant award/letter of credit process, via electronic transfer of funds, or by other payment method as determined by USDA, upon receipt of a properly executed grant agreement and subject to the availability of funding. USDA expects to make funds available to the grantee in advance of need. The submission of an application does not guarantee funding. Upon receipt of an award, applicants may be asked to submit additional financial information and documentation.

E. Award Periods

The award period for the FY 2015 USDA Farm to School Program grants will be as follows, beginning from the date of the award:

- Planning grants will be awarded for a one year grant period;
- Implementation grants will be awarded for a one or up to a two year grant period; and,
- Support Service grants will be awarded for a one or up to a two year grant period.
- Conference/Event grants will be awarded for a one year grant period.

As an example, in FY 2014, announcements regarding USDA Farm to School Grant Program awards were made on November 19, 2013 and all grant or cooperative agreements commenced on December 1, 2013.

All grant funds must be obligated and all program activities under the grant (other than activities relating to the close out of the grant) must be completed by the end of award period. The close out of the grant must occur no later than 90 days following the end of the award period, and all obligations incurred under the grant must be liquidated by this date. Any funds that are not liquidated within 90 days following the end of the award period must be returned to USDA. In addition, the final progress reports are due to USDA no later than 90 days following the end of the award period. Please see Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements for additional reporting requirements.

Conference/event grant funds must be expended by September 30, 2015.

D. RFA Feedback

USDA seeks comments about this RFA. We will consider the comments when we develop the next RFA for the Farm to School Grant Program. Submit written stakeholder comments via e-mail to: farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov. In your comments, please state that you are responding to the FY2015 Farm to School Grant Program RFA feedback request. The deadline for submitting comments is 11:59 PM ET on **May 14, 2014**.

IX. GRANT APPLICATION: WHAT TO INCLUDE

A. Planning Grants

Step I: Complete the Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet Found on Grants.gov

Step II: Include a Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 5 pages.)

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below.

1. **School District & Farm to School Background Information.** Briefly describe the state of your farm to school efforts to date. What farm to school activities, if any, have you executed to date? Are you currently procuring any local foods for service in the Federal Child Nutrition Programs? Have your efforts spanned the district or been isolated to select schools?

Note any early successes, lessons learned, or challenges. *(As noted above, if your school or district has engaged in many farm to school activities, an implementation grant may be more appropriate.)*

2. **Need & Readiness.** Describe any resources, infrastructure, or systems/processes already in place that will help your school district implement a successful farm to school program. Clearly indicate why the school district is ready for or interested in a farm to school program and why now is the right time to go through the planning process. Do you foresee any challenges in farm to school, and if so, how do you envision the planning process will help you overcome them?
3. **Objectives, Activities and Timeline.** Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines. All objectives should lead to the end goal of having a comprehensive Farm to School Implementation Plan in place by the end of the grant period. Your project timeline should start no earlier than November 1, 2013. If awards are made after the start of the fiscal year, the timeline will be shifted appropriately.

(Example) Objective: By May, 2015, identify supply chain partners we could work with to increase our procurement of regional foods by 20%.

Activities:

- *Identify local farmers and regional supply chain actors (Who: Bob Jones, By: Jan 2015)*
 - *Host initial meeting w/ potential supply chain partners (Who: Bob Jones, By: Feb 2015)*
 - *Follow up w/ select supply chain partners one-on-one (Who: Bob Jones, By: Feb – Apr 2015)*
4. **Evaluation.** Evaluating your farm to school progress, both from a quantitative and a qualitative perspective, and then assessing your program's overall impact, will be critical. Please discuss the tracking mechanisms you currently have in place that could be employed to support your farm to school evaluation efforts, and discuss any previous experience performing multi-faceted evaluations and analyses.
 5. **Project Management & Quality Assurance.** Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results. Note any relevant experience in managing similar planning activities.
 6. **Staffing.** Identify the staff (or contractors) who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience.
 7. **Dispersed Benefit.** Detail the professional associations you belong to and note any leadership role your district or school might play. As for collaborations, note the nature of your collaboration (e.g. does your district participate in group buys, partner with other districts on trainings, etc.). How might you share your experiences in developing a Farm to School Implementation Plan with others in your peer group?

8. **Sustainability.** Upon successful completion and submission of a Farm to School Implementation Plan, planning grant awardees will be invited to submit an implementation grant application. However there are no guarantees that planning grant awardees will receive a subsequent grant. How will you ensure your farm to school program is executed regardless of whether you receive additional federal funding?

Step III: Provide a Budget and Budget Narrative (Not included as part of 5 page maximum.)

Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of planning grant funds and justifying costs. Your budget must be submitted using the “Budget Information and Instruction Form” (SF-424A). (See Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms.)

Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project’s goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include at least a 25 percent match of the total project cost.

The source of matching funds must be clearly explained in the budget narrative.

Sample Match Calculation

Grant Request:	\$45,000
Match Amount:	\$20,000
Total Project Cost:	\$65,000
Match Percent:	31 % (match amount / total project cost)
USDA Percent:	69 % (grant request / total project cost)

Note that allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the grant request, and that travel costs to at least one face-to-face meeting must be included. Applicants may not use Federal food service funds as a match for this grant program.

Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching, also codified in 2 CFR 215.23.

(http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2005/janqtr/pdf/2cfr215.23.pdf).

The grantee must maintain written records to support all allowable costs which are claimed as being its contribution to participation, as well as costs paid by the Federal Government. In the event the grantee does not provide the minimum amount of cost share, as described in the budget, the Government’s contribution will be reduced in proportion to the grantee’s contribution.

If available, the current **indirect cost rate**, negotiated with the cognizant federal negotiating agency, should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be

requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. USDA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be used.

Budget Narrative: In addition to the budget submitted via the “Budget Information and Instruction Form” (SF-424A), you must also include a narrative line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. This narrative, like the budget form itself, is not considered part of the page limit. (See Section XVIII: RFA Budget Narrative Checklist.)

Step IV: Include Attachments

Required Attachments

1. Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV’s) or resumes for staff managing this project.

Optional Attachments

2. Applicants may also choose to include relevant newspaper articles or letters of support that demonstrate community need and interest. Letters of support should be presented on letterhead. These attachments, no more than 10 pages in total, are allowed but not required.

Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms

All federally required forms are completed using fillable forms on grants.gov during the application process. The following forms are required of all planning, implementation and support service grant applicants.

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF424)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL):
 - a. Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities.
 - b. If your organization does not intend to lobby or otherwise performs no lobbying efforts, write “**Not Applicable**” in any data field.
 - c. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sfillin.pdf>
5. Farm to School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/FSGP-V1.0.pdf>

In review, the following federal forms are required of all planning, implementation, and support service grant applicants:

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL)
5. Farm to School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet

If an application does not include all appropriate information, USDA will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation.

B. Implementation Grants

Step I: Complete the Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet found on Grants.gov

Step II: Include a Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 10 pages.)

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below.

Farm to School Experience

1. **Procurement.** Describe your specific efforts to date to buy local and regional products. How does your program define local? In addition, provide information on key indicators regarding your progress by answering the following questions:
 - What were your overall 2012-2013 food costs?
 - What percentage of your food costs were directed to local or regional suppliers? (Please estimate a percentage with and without fluid milk.)
 - How many calendar days do you offer meal service during the school year, excluding summer feeding programs?
 - Approximately what percentage of those days included local or regional offerings?
 - Would you describe local offerings as occurring daily, weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, or infrequently/irregularly?
 - Which types of products have you been sourcing locally (fruits, vegetables, legumes, grain and bread products, meats, dairy, etc.)? List categories in order of most to least and provide examples of regionally sourced items.
 - How do you source your local products (through your existing food service management company, a distributor, directly from the farmer, from a food cooperative, etc.)?
2. **Promotion.** Briefly describe how you share information with the school community about local offerings in the cafeteria (e.g. highlighted on menus, announced on the PA system, info sent home in school newsletters, taste tests with students, preview of products day before served, cafeteria staff encourage tasting, district's public affairs office distributes press releases, etc.). Have you created any regular or branded special programs (e.g. Harvest of the Month, Local Lunch Day, etc.)?

3. **Experiential Learning.** Briefly describe what types of experiential learning opportunities are available in your district or school that allow children hands-on opportunities to learn about food, agriculture or nutrition? (e.g. school gardens, field trips, cooking classes, etc.)
4. **Curriculum Integration.** Briefly describe how cafeteria programs are reinforced and supported throughout the broader school environment and how lessons regarding food, agriculture and nutrition education are disseminated in your district or school? (e.g. the 5th grade history curriculum is tied to the traditional foods of the Americas that we serve in November; 2nd graders measure plant growth in the school garden as part of their math curriculum; etc.)
5. **Management and Organization.** Briefly describe how your farm to school program is organized. Do you have a coordinator, facilitator, or team lead? Is there an oversight committee or other formal governance body to guide efforts? If so, who participates and how frequently does the group meet? Do you have specific farm to school goals for this school year or next? Is farm to school, specifically or in concept, included in your district's Wellness Policy or Administrative Rules or other guidance documents or policies?
6. **Key Partners & Strategic Relationships.** Who have been your key partners and how do they contribute to your farm to school efforts?
7. **Evaluation Protocols.** How are you evaluating your progress? Who is responsible for data gathering and evaluation? To what extent are you conducting process evaluations (qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress toward the objectives, accomplishment of activities) and to what extent are you conducting outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met and what impact they had)?
8. **Lessons Learned to Date.** Please summarize what you have learned to date. What has worked well and what hasn't? What specific opportunities do you see on the horizon? What have been key challenges you've worked through and/or still need to address?

The Project

9. **Proposed Project.** What is your proposed project? Focus on what impact successful completion of the project will have on your school community and the community at large. Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the objectives of the Farm to School Grant Program as described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding. Describe in detail the procurement aspect of your approach, i.e. do you plan to purchase via existing distributors, DOD Fresh, direct from farms, school garden or orchard, etc.?
10. **Key Project Partners.** As applicable, list the organizations and businesses involved in carrying out this project. Include a description of the relevant experience each will bring as well as information about what each is responsible for.
11. **Objectives, Activities and Timeline.** Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines.

Your project timeline should start no earlier than November 1, 2013. If awards are made after the start of the fiscal year, the timeline will be shifted appropriately.

(Example) Objective: By August 31, 2015, freeze at least XXX lbs of local fruit for use in lunch program.

Activities:

- *Query food service staff regarding type of fruit preferred along with preferences for receipt of product (size pouch, amount of pre-cutting, etc.)*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, District (By: March/April 2015)*
- *Identify 3-5 test products*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, District, and Bob Jones, MidValley Growers (By: May 2015)*

12. Evaluation Plan. How do you plan to evaluate your success in accomplishing key activities and achieving end results or impacts? (Note that USDA reserves the option to provide further detail regarding specific metrics and evaluation expectations at the time grants are awarded, or any time thereafter. See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)

13. Sustainability. USDA funds are envisioned as a one-time infusion of capital. Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. How will your farm to school program be sustained over the long-term?

Quality Assurance & Staffing

14. Project Management & Quality Assurance. Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results. Note any relevant experience in managing similar projects.

15. Staffing. Identify the staff (or contractors) who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience.

Step III: Provide a Budget and Budget Narrative (Not included as part of 10 page maximum.)

Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of planning grant funds and justifying costs. Your budget must be submitted using the “Budget Information and Instruction Form” (SF-424A). (See Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms.)

Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project’s goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include at least a 25 percent match of the total project cost.

The source of matching funds must be clearly explained in the budget narrative.

Sample Match Calculation

Grant Request:	\$100,000
Match Amount:	\$35,000
Total Project Cost:	\$135,000
Match Percent:	26 % (match / total project cost)
USDA Percent:	74 % (grant request / total project cost)

Note that allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the grant request, and that travel costs to at least one face-to-face meeting must be included. Applicants may not use federal food service funds as a match for this grant program.

Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching, also codified in 2 CFR 215.23.

(http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2005/janqtr/pdf/2cfr215.23.pdf).

The grantee must maintain written records to support all allowable costs which are claimed as being its contribution to participation, as well as costs paid by the Federal Government. In the event the grantee does not provide the minimum amount of cost share, as described in the budget, the Government's contribution will be reduced in proportion to the grantee's contribution.

If available, the current **indirect cost rate**, negotiated with the cognizant federal negotiating agency, should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. USDA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be used.

Budget Narrative: In addition to the budget submitted via the "Budget Information and Instruction Form" (SF-424A), applicants must also include a narrative line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. This narrative, like the budget from itself, is not considered part of the page limit. (See Section XVIII: RFA Budget Narrative Checklist.)

Step IV: Include Attachments

Required Attachments

- Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV's) or resumes for staff managing this project.
- Include at least three (3) but no more than six (6) letters of support detailing the degree to which the applicant's farm to school efforts are supported by external partners. Letters of support should be presented on letterhead. It is strongly recommended that, as relevant, applicants include letters of support specific to the proposed project. Applicants must include a letter of support for any partner included in the budget as a recipient of grant

funds, and this letter must include a statement related to the work the partner will perform as part of the grant. (Where subcontracts with more than six (6) entities are proposed, applicants may submit more than six (6) letters.)

Optional Attachments

- Applicants may include evidence of previous farm to school program success and/or maturity. Relevant attachments include: media coverage, current or past planning documents related to farm to school efforts, meeting minutes from past farm to school committee meetings, spreadsheets detailing supply chain relationships or amount of produce purchased locally, etc. (Attach no more than 10 pages of documents.)

Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms

All federally required forms are completed using fillable forms on grants.gov during the application process. The following federal forms are required of all planning, implementation and support service grant applicants.

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL):
 - a. Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities.
 - b. If your organization does not intend to lobby or otherwise performs no lobbying efforts, write “**Not Applicable**” in any data field.
 - c. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sfillin.pdf>
5. Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/FSGP-V1.0.pdf>

In review, the following federal forms are required of all planning, implementation, and support service grant applicants:

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL)
5. Farm to School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet

If an application does not include all appropriate information, USDA will consider the application to be non-responsive and will eliminate it from further evaluation.

C. Support Service Grants

Step I: Complete the Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet found on Grants.gov

Step II: Include a Proposal Narrative (Not to exceed 10 pages.)

In preparing your proposal narrative, provide the information requested below, in the order presented below.

Background Info

1. **Organizational Information.** Describe the type of organization you operate, including your line of business and the product(s) you produce or the services you provide. As applicable, identify whether you are approved by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as a non-profit organization with 501(c) (3) status. (If so, please include a copy of your approval letter from the IRS in your submission.)
2. **Describe Your Experience in Farm to School Initiatives.** Address any previous experience and success in farm to school procurement strategies, promotional efforts, hands-on learning, training, curriculum development, planning and evaluation, as appropriate.
3. **Farm to School Lessons Learned to Date.** Please summarize what you have learned to date. What has worked well and what hasn't? What specific opportunities do you see on the horizon? What have been key challenges you've worked through and/or still need to address?

The Project

4. **Proposed Project.** What is your proposed project? Focus on what impact successful completion of the project will have on your partnering SFAs and the community at large. Discuss how the project and its proposed outcomes will address the objectives of the Farm to School Grant Program as described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
5. **Key Project Partners.** If applicable, which school districts or schools support this project? What other partners are involved? List the organizations and businesses that will be involved in carrying out this project. Include a description of the relevant experience each will bring and what they will contribute.
6. **Objectives, Activities and Timeline.** Clearly state project objectives; use descriptive statements that specifically describe what you hope to accomplish and include deadlines as well as responsible parties. Your project timeline should start no earlier than November 1, 2013. If awards are made after the start of the fiscal year, the timeline will be shifted appropriately.

(Example) Objective: By August 31, 2015, host four farm to school stakeholder meetings throughout the state.

Activities:

- *Identify four recruitment areas and corresponding key partners*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, Education Outreach Coordinator (By: March/April 2015)*

- *Recruit a minimum of 40 people to each meeting*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, Education Outreach Coordinator (By: May 2015)*
- *Host four meetings and distribute contact information and notes to participants*
 - *Who: Sarah Johnson, Education Outreach Coordinator (By Aug, 2015)*

7. **Evaluation Plan.** How do you plan to evaluate your success in accomplishing key activities and achieving end results or impacts? Who will be responsible for data gathering and evaluation? To what extent do you have experience conducting process evaluations (qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress toward the objectives, accomplishment of activities) and to what extent do you have experience conducting outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met and what impact they had)? (Note that USDA reserves the option to provide further detail regarding specific metrics and evaluation expectations at the time grants are awarded. See Section XIII: Administrative Notices & Requirements, F: Evaluation and Impact.)
8. **Sustainability.** USDA funds are envisioned as a one-time infusion of capital. Describe which aspects or components of the project will continue beyond the end of the project period. How will your farm to school program be sustained over the long-term?

Quality Assurance & Staffing

9. **Project Management & Quality Assurance.** Describe your approach to managing the project to ensure that project activities are completed on time, within budget and with quality results. Note any relevant experience in managing similar projects.
10. **Staffing.** Identify the staff (or contractors) who will manage the project. Describe roles and responsibilities of these employees or contractors, as well as relevant qualifications and experience.
11. **Financial Management System.** Describe your financial management system and how you will manage federal funds if you receive an award, including how you will separately identify, track, and report the use of federal funds. Provide assurance that you are financially viable and a going concern and can manage a federal grant award.

Step III: Provide a Budget and Budget Narrative (Not included as part of 10 page maximum.)

Provide a proposed budget describing appropriate use of planning grant funds and justifying costs. Your budget must be submitted using the “Budget Information and Instruction Form” (SF-424A). (See Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms.)

Proposed costs must be reasonable, necessary, and allocable to carry out the project’s goals and objectives. Include a total project budget, the amount requested from USDA, and the match contributed to the project. USDA will contribute no more than 75 percent of the total project costs; applicants must include at least a 25 percent match of the total project cost.

The source of matching funds must be clearly explained in the budget narrative.

Sample Match Calculation

Grant Request:	\$100,000
Match Amount:	\$35,000
Total Project Cost:	\$135,000
Match Percent:	26 % (match / total project cost)
USDA Percent:	74 % (grant request / total project cost)

Note that allowable food costs may not constitute more than 10 percent of the grant request, and that travel costs to at least one face-to-face meeting must be included. Applicants may not use federal food service funds as a match for this grant program.

Cost sharing may be in the form of allowable direct or indirect costs. The basis for determining the value of cash and in-kind contributions must be in accordance with OMB Circular A-110, Subpart C.23 - Cost Sharing and Matching, also codified in 2 CFR 215.23.

(http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/cfr_2005/janqtr/pdf/2cfr215.23.pdf).

The grantee must maintain written records to support all allowable costs which are claimed as being its contribution to participation, as well as costs paid by the Federal Government. In the event the grantee does not provide the minimum amount of cost share, as described in the budget, the Government's contribution will be reduced in proportion to the grantee's contribution.

As it relates to **indirect costs**, if available, the current rate negotiated with the cognizant federal negotiating agency should be used. Indirect costs may not exceed the negotiated rate. If a negotiated rate is used, the percentage and base should be indicated. If no rate has been established the applicant may indicate "None—will negotiate" and a reasonable dollar amount for indirect costs may be requested, which will be subject to approval by USDA. In the latter case, if a proposal is recommended for funding, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted prior to award to support the amount of indirect costs requested. USDA will request an indirect cost rate proposal and provide instructions, as necessary. An applicant may elect not to charge indirect costs and, instead, use all grant funds for direct costs. If indirect costs are not charged, the phrase "None requested" should be used.

Budget Narrative: In addition to the budget submitted via the "Budget Information and Instruction Form" (SF-424A), applicants must also include a narrative line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. This narrative, like the budget from itself, is not considered part of the page limit. (See Section XVIII: RFA Budget Narrative Checklist.)

Step IV: Include Attachments

Required Attachments

- Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV's) or resumes for staff managing this project.
- Include at least three (3) but no more than six (6) letters of support detailing the degree to which the applicant's farm to school efforts are supported by external school and

community partners. Letters of support should be presented on letterhead. It is strongly recommended that, as relevant, applicants include letters of support specific to the proposed project. Applicants must include a letter of support for any partner included in the budget as a recipient of grant funds, and this letter must include a statement related to the work the partner will perform as part of the grant. (Where subcontracts with more than six (6) entities are proposed, applicants may submit more than six (6) letters.)

Optional Attachments

- Applicants may include evidence of previous farm to school program success and/or maturity. Relevant attachments include: media coverage, current or past planning documents related to farm to school efforts, meeting minutes from past farm to school committee meetings, spreadsheets detailing supply chain relationships or amount of produce purchased locally, etc. (Attach no more than 10 pages of documents.)

Step V: Complete Required Grant Application Forms

All federally required forms are completed using fillable forms on grants.gov during the application process. The following forms are required of all planning, implementation and support service grant applicants.

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF-424)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
2. Budget Information and Instruction (SF-424A)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms.html>
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL):
 - a. Indicate on the form whether your organization intends to conduct lobbying activities.
 - b. If your organization does not intend to lobby or otherwise performs no lobbying efforts, write “**Not Applicable**” in any data field.
 - c. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/omb/grants/sflllin.pdf>
5. Farm to School Grant Program Cover Sheet
 - a. As a reference, the form can be obtained at:
<http://apply07.grants.gov/apply/forms/sample/FSGP-V1.0.pdf>

In review, the following federal forms are required of all planning, implementation, and support service grant applicants:

1. Application and Instruction for Federal Assistance (SF424)
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3. Assurance-Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
4. Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF LLL)
5. Farm to School Grant Program Application Cover Sheet

If an application does not include all appropriate information, USDA will consider the application to be non-responsive and may eliminate it from further evaluation.

D. Conference/Event Contracts

Step I: Complete a Letter of Intent (Not to exceed 3 pages.)

In preparing your letter of intent, please address the following:

- Please describe the event. Where and when will it take place?
- Is it a local, state, regional or national event?
- Is there a planning committee? If so, who is on it? Alternatively, describe any other partners that will play a substantive role in putting on the event.
- Is this an event you've hosted before or is this the first time the event will be held?
- What need does the event address?
- What are the primary goals of the event?
- What types and how many people do you expect will be reached by your event?
- If the event includes a procurement focus, has the trainer participated in USDA's train the trainer program for local procurement in federal school meal programs?
- Please attach a draft agenda.

Step II: Provide a Budget (Not included as part of 3 page maximum.)

Provide a proposed budget narrative describing appropriate use of federal funds and justifying costs. The budget narrative should include a narrative line item description for every allowable cost and show how it supports the project goals. Projects will be funded at the following levels:

- State focused project awards will range from \$15,000 to \$25,000.
- Regionally / nationally focused conference awards will range from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

Step III: Include Attachments

Required Attachments

- Include relevant curriculum vitae (CV's) or resumes for staff managing this project.

Optional Attachments

- Applicants may include evidence of previous farm to school conference, event or training success and/or participation. Relevant attachments include: media coverage, agendas from past farm to school events, event promotional materials, etc. (Attach no more than 5 pages of documents.)

Step IV: Submit application

The letter of intent and required attachments must be sent via email to farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov by 11:59 PM ET on **April 2, 2014**.

Letters of Intent received after the deadline date may be deemed ineligible and may not be reviewed or considered. A confirmation email will be sent from USDA staff to confirm receipt of your application and/or letter of intent within two weeks of the submission date.

FNS will request applicants of selected projects to submit a full proposal including, but not limited to, SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL. In addition, the applicant will be required to submit a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM.

X. APPLICATION FORMAT

Applications should meet the following formatting guidelines:

- Include a **table of contents** (not counted towards any page limit);
- **5-page** maximum length for **Planning** grant narrative response; or **10-page** maximum length for **Implementation** and **Support Service** grant narrative response; or **3-page** maximum for **Conference/Event** letters of intent
- Page restrictions apply only to content of the narrative proposals and do not apply to other required forms, the budget, or supporting documents (however, supporting documents should be limited to no more than 10 pages for planning, implementation and support service applications, and 5 pages for conference/event applications); Pages exceeding the stated page limits may be omitted during the review process.
- 8 ½" by 11" paper;
- 12 point Times New Roman or Arial font size (smaller font may be used in tables, charts and graphs as long as they are clearly readable);
- Single-spaced;
- Margins are not specified; and,
- Numbered pages.

XI. HOW TO SUBMIT

A. Planning, Implementation and Support Service Grant Application

Electronic Submission via grants.gov: Complete grant applications must be uploaded to www.grants.gov by 11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET), on April 30, 2014. Applications received after the deadline date may be deemed ineligible and may not be reviewed or considered. USDA may not consider any additions or revisions to an application once it is received. USDA may not accept mailed, faxed, or hand-delivered applications for planning, implementation and support service grants.

Please be aware that the grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting applications to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team noted in SECTION XVIII: Agency Contact.

In order to submit your application via www.grants.gov, you must have obtained a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number and registered in both the new System for Award Management (SAM) and on grants.gov. The applicant is strongly advised to allow ample time to initiate its grants.gov application submission. All applicants must have current SAM status at the time of application submission and throughout the duration of a Federal Award in accordance with 2 CFR Part 25. Please visit the following websites to obtain additional information on how

to obtain a DUNS number (www.dnb.com) and register in SAM (<https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>).

SAM Overview: The System for Award Management (SAM) combines Federal procurement systems and the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance into one new system. For additional information regarding SAM, see the following link: https://www.acquisition.gov/SAM_Guides/Quick%20Guide%20for%20Grants%20Registrations%20v1.pdf

SAM Registration: For applicant organizations that were previously registered in the Central Contractor Registry (CCR), relevant applicant information is already in SAM; however, you will need to set up a SAM account, as necessary, to update any information. To register in SAM, the applicant's DUNS number, Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on the applicant's last tax return) are all required. SAM verifies all information submitted by the applicant using several systems. This verification can take 3-5 business days after your registration is submitted to SAM. **Applicants that do not receive confirmation that SAM registration is complete and active after 3 days should contact SAM at <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>.** Applicants must have a valid SAM registration no later than 3 days prior to the application due date of this solicitation in order to upload their application in Grants.gov.

SAM Presentation/Training: The General Services Administration (GSA) has created a SAM training presentation. To view the presentation, please visit: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mmHcKCchaiY>

This presentation will be extremely useful for SAM users that are:

- AM for the first time; or
- Setting up user permissions from CCR into the SAM registration (called migrating); or
- Updating /renewing CCR record in SAM.

DUNS Number: In order to obtain a DUNS number, if your organization does not have one, or if you are unsure of your organization's number, contact Dun and Bradstreet via the internet at <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or by calling 1-888-814-1435, Monday thru Friday, 8am-9pm ET. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number. Obtaining a DUNS number may take several days.

Grants.gov Registration: In order to apply for a grant, your organization must have completed the above registrations, as well as register on grants.gov. The grants.gov registration process can be accessed at <http://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>.

Please ensure that if your organization has previously registered in grants.gov that the individual who is submitting the application has been designated as an Authorized Organization Representative by the E-Business Point of Contact in your organization. Generally, the registration process takes between **3-5 business days**.

Allow your organization ample time to complete the necessary steps for the submission of your grant application package on grants.gov.

Filenames: All applicants **MUST** follow grants.gov guidance on file naming conventions. To avoid submission issues, please follow the guidance provided in the grants.gov Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ):

“Are there restrictions on file names for any attachment I include with my application package?”

File attachment names longer than approximately 50 characters can cause problems processing packages. Please limit file attachment names. Also, do not use any special characters (example: &, -, *, %, /, #', -), this includes periods (.), spacing followed by a dash in the file and for word separation, use underscore (example: Attached_File.pdf) in naming the attachments.”

Please note that if these guidelines are not followed, your application will be rejected by grants.gov. Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team listed in SECTION XVIII: Agency Contact.

Notice of Submission: Approximately three weeks after the close of the grant period, USDA will confirm receipt of all proposals via email. If you do not receive an email, please contact USDA via email. (See SECTION XVIII: Agency Contact.)

Special Instructions/Notices:

- Applications submitted without the required forms, and necessary certifications may not be considered.
- Applications not submitted by the due date and via the grants.gov portal may not be considered.
- Grant awards are subject to the availability of funding.

In review, in order to make an electronic submission, applicants must:

1. Obtain a **DUNS** number
 - a. <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform> or 1-888-814-1435
 - b. There is no fee associated with obtaining a DUNS number.
 - c. It may take several days to obtain a DUNS number.
2. Register in **SAM**
 - a. <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>
 - b. Must have organization’s DUNS, entity’s Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on last tax return).
 - c. It may take 3-5 business days to register in SAM.
3. Register in **grants.gov**
 - a. http://grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp
 - b. Generally, the registration process takes between 3-5 business days.
 - c. Must have DUNS and be registered in SAM.

PLEASE NOTE: We strongly encourage grantees to begin the process at least **3 weeks before** the grant due date of the grant solicitation. The grants.gov system provides several confirmation notices; applicants should ensure receipt of confirmation that the application was accepted.

Applicants experiencing difficulty submitting an application to www.grants.gov should contact the grant support team listed in SECTION XVIII: Agency Contact.

B. Conference/Event Grant Letter of Intent

The letter of intent and required attachments must be sent via email to farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov by 11:59 PM ET on **April 2, 2014**.

FNS will request applicants of selected projects to submit a full proposal including, but not limited to, SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL. In addition, the applicant will be required to submit a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM. In addition, the applicant will be required to submit a valid DUNS number and be registered in SAM. Further DUNS number and SAM registration instructions will be provided, should the applicant be selected for further review.

XII. APPLICATION REVIEW & GRANT AWARD PROCESS

A. Initial Screening

USDA will screen all applications to ensure they are eligible and fully responsive. Eligible and responsive applications are those that meet the following requirements:

1. Submitted by eligible applicants (see Section IV: Eligibility Requirements);
2. Meet all other eligibility requirements (see Section IV: Eligibility Requirements);
3. Submitted on or before the required deadline (see Section VII: Important Dates and Award Periods);
4. Include at least a 25 percent match of the total cost of the project;
5. Are complete (see Section IX: Grant Application: What to Include); and,
6. Are in the required format (see Section X, Application Format).

B. Panel Review

Note: See section IX. GRANT APPLICATION: WHAT TO INCLUDE part A. Conference/Event Grants for information about the Conference/Events selection process.

After initial screening, USDA will convene an evaluation panel to consider the merit of each grant application. Each application that passes initial screening will be given to the panel to be evaluated and scored according to how well it addresses each application component. The panel will assign each application a score using the evaluation criteria and weights specified below for each evaluation component.

Scoring for Planning Grant Applications:

- | | |
|--|------------------|
| • Need, Readiness and Likelihood of Success | 25 points |
|--|------------------|

- The applicant is appropriate for a planning grant, i.e., the applicant can demonstrate support and readiness for starting a farm to school program, but has undertaken few farm to school activities.
- The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; school district or school's readiness is evident.
- Sufficient pre-existing resources are in place such that there is a reasonable likelihood of farm to school success.
- Challenges have been identified and addressed and/or a path for addressing obstacles is in place.
- **Alignment with Farm to School Grant Program Goals** **25 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the Farm to School Grant Program focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
 - The planning activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable and measurable and clearly support:
 - Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings;
 - An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education;
 - Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships; and,
 - Evaluation and data tracking requirements.
- **Project Design and Management** **30 point**
 - The qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project.
 - The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.
 - The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project.
 - The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the Planning grant time frame.
- **Sustainability and Transferability** **10 points**
 - The proposed planning project is likely to produce outcomes and information that not only will aid the applicant in implementing a farm to school program, but also will produce knowledge that is transferable to other school districts and/or schools.
 - The applicant demonstrates that it has the capacity to implement farm to school program elements after the planning process has been completed, with or without continued federal support.
- **Budget Plan** **10 points**
 - The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
 - Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
 - The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals.

- Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
- If indirect costs are included, ensure the approved indirect cost rate is properly applied to direct costs. (A copy of the approval letter from the cognizant federal agency must be provided and/or a statement that you will negotiate one upon award.)

Scoring for Implementation Grant Applications:

- **Farm to School Experience, Track Record** **25 points**
 - Sufficient pre-existing resources are in place and evidence of previously successful experience with farm to school execution exists such that there is a reasonable likelihood of farm to school success.
 - Evidence of an integrated approach that includes procurement and other farm to school elements exists.
 - Evidence that a strong leadership team or management structure is in place.
 - Evidence that a culture of learning and problem solving exists such that obstacles have been overcome or innovative approaches have been demonstrated.
- **Alignment with Farm to School Grant Program Goals** **25 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the Farm to School Grant Program focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
 - Substantive community partnerships are in place as evidenced by support letters and applicant's previous success in working with community partners.
 - The activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable and measurable and clearly support:
 - Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings;
 - An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education;
 - Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships; and,
 - Evaluation and data tracking requirements.
- **Project Design and Management** **20 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; the applicant's capacity is evident.
 - The qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership and management structure reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project.
 - The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.
 - The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project.
 - The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the planning grant time frame.
- **Evaluation** **10 points**

- Evidence exists that the applicant has experience with multi-faceted evaluation methodologies, and evaluation protocols are embedded in the current request.
- **Sustainability** **10 points**
 - The applicant demonstrates that it has the capacity to implement farm to school program elements with or without continued federal support.
- **Budget Plan** **10 points**
 - The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
 - Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
 - The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals.
 - Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
 - If indirect costs are included, ensure the approved indirect cost rate is properly applied to direct costs. (A copy of the approval letter from the cognizant federal agency must be provided and/or a statement that you will negotiate one upon award.)

Scoring for Support Service Grants

- **Farm to School Experience, Track Record** **25 points**
 - Sufficient pre-existing resources are in place such that there is a reasonable likelihood of farm to school success.
 - Evidence that school and community partnerships are in place, as evidenced by letters of support.
 - Evidence that a strong leadership team or management structure is in place.
 - Evidence of program or organizational maturity.
 - Evidence that a culture of learning and problem solving exists such that obstacles have been overcome or innovative approaches have been demonstrated.
- **Alignment with Farm to School Grant Program Goals** **25 points**
 - The project goals and objectives are in line with the Farm to School Grant Program focus areas and purpose of the funding described in Section III: Authority and Purpose of Grant Funding.
 - The activities to be completed during the grant period are clear, attainable and measurable and clearly support:
 - Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings;
 - An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education;
 - Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships; and,
 - Evaluation and data tracking requirements.
- **Project Design and Management** **20 points**
 - The need and timeliness for the project is clearly demonstrated; applicant's capacity is evident.
 - The qualifications of the staff involved with the proposed project and/or organizational leadership and management structure reflect the expertise necessary to carry out the proposed project.
 - The level of staff allocation is appropriate to expect both excellent program execution as well as program evaluation.

- The management approach (including staffing, procurement of contractors, communications planning, quality assurance planning, partnering with appropriate stakeholders, tracking timelines, monitoring progress, etc.) indicates that the applicant has the capacity to manage and execute the planning project successfully to meet the goals of the project.
- The scope and timeline proposed for the project are reasonable and attainable during the support services grant time frame.
- **Evaluation** **10 points**
 - Evidence exists that the applicant has experience with multi-faceted evaluation methodologies, and evaluation protocols are embedded in the current request.
- **Sustainability** **10 points**
 - The applicant demonstrates that it has the capacity to implement farm to school program elements with or without continued federal support.
- **Budget Plan** **10 points**
 - The total funding amount requested is appropriate for the scope of the project.
 - Proposed costs are reasonable, necessary and allocable to carry out the project's goals and objectives.
 - The budget includes a line item description for every allowable cost and shows how it supports the project goals.
 - Budget calculations and documentation show clearly how the budget components were developed and costs estimated.
 - If indirect costs are included, ensure the approved indirect cost rate is properly applied to direct costs. (A copy of the approval letter from the cognizant federal agency must be provided and/or a statement that you will negotiate one upon award.)

Conference/Event Letters of Intent will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- Relevance of the proposed conference, training or event to agriculture and food systems in the US and to strengthening farm to school networks, knowledge or impact;
- Qualifications of the organizing committee and appropriateness of invited speakers to topic areas being covered; and
- Uniqueness, timeliness of the conference, and appropriateness of budget requests.
- With regard to events that include a procurement focus, those that utilize trainers who have completed USDA's train the trainer programming for local procurement are preferred.

C. Selection

After evaluation and scoring, grant applications will be arrayed by type (planning, implementation, and support service) and by score within the type, starting with the highest score. Applications with the highest scores for each type will be recommended to receive funding.

A list of all applications deemed eligible for award will be submitted to the Selection Official for a final decision regarding funding. The Selection Official has ultimate authority to decide which applications are approved and funded, and *generally* will adhere to the recommendations made by the reviewers, provided that funding is available. However, the Selection Official reserves the

right to deviate from those recommendations. The Selection Official may take other factors into account when selecting awards.

Other USDA or FNS priorities the Selection Official may consider include, *but are not limited to*: projects that serve a high proportion of children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals; the need to ensure geographic diversity and a range of projects from rural and urban areas; innovation demonstrated in an application; agency priorities; and the scores assigned by the review panel. The Selection Official may also determine that, based on their scores, few of the applications are of technical merit. In such a case, FNS may make fewer awards or smaller awards than expected or make no awards. In addition, USDA reserves the option to select one or more lower rated applications in order to achieve a diversity of projects and regional representation.

Conference/Event Grant Letters of Intent will be evaluated according to the Agency priorities listed within this RFA. FNS will request applicants of those selected projects to submit a full proposal including, but not limited to, SF-424, SF-424A, SF-424B, and SF-LLL. FNS will respond only to those Letters of Intent selected for award.

D. Determination of Award Amounts

As part of the technical review process, USDA will review applicants' budgets to ensure that all costs are reasonable, allowable and applicable. Applications selected and approved for funding with budgets that are realistic, well justified, and supported will likely be funded at the requested amounts. However, USDA reserves the right to fund applications at lesser amounts if USDA determines that the project can be implemented with less funding; or at lesser amounts if federal funding is not sufficient to fully fund all applications that merit awards. This is subject to availability of funds.

XIII. ADMINISTRATIVE NOTICES AND REQUIREMENTS

A. Confidentiality of an Application

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of USDA transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. Only those proposals which are funded may be released and shared with the public. Applications which do not result in an award will be not released. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

B. Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality of the Review Process

The agency requires all panel reviewers to sign a conflict of interest and confidentiality form to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may affect the application review and evaluation process. Names of applicants, including states and tribal governments, submitting an application will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent

permitted by law. In addition, the identities of the reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants.

Note: Through our work supporting farm to school initiatives, we regularly communicate with other federal programs and non-federal funders (e.g. private and community foundations) interested in supporting farm to school activities. While the USDA Farm to School Program is limited to awarding \$5 million a year, we hope to leverage our relationships with other funders to increase overall support for farm to school activities.

From time to time other funders request information about farm to school projects planned or underway in various communities. As such, the coversheet includes a section for you to give permission to USDA to share your proposal information. If you select 'YES - Please share my information with other funders,' information about your organization and a brief description of your proposed project will be included in a list that may be shared with other funders. These funders may elect to communicate directly with you at a future date.. If you do NOT want your proposal shared, on the coversheet check 'NO - Do NOT share my information with other funders.'

C. Award Notice

Unless an applicant receives a signed award document with terms and conditions; any contact from a USDA grants or program officer should not be considered as a notice of a grant award. No pre-award or pre-agreement costs incurred prior to the effective start date are allowed unless approved and stated on the signed award document.

The Government is not obligated to make any award as a result of this RFA. Only the recognized FNS authorized signature can bind the USDA Food and Nutrition Service to the expenditure of funds related to an award's approved budget.

D. Financial Reporting

Planning grant awardees will submit a mid-term financial report and a final financial report. Implementation and support service grant awardees will submit financial reports on a quarterly basis throughout the grant term and a final financial report. Conference/event awardees will submit a final financial report. Award recipients will be required to enter the SF-425, Financial Status Report data into the FNS Food Program Reporting System (FPRS). In order to access FPRS, the grant recipient must obtain USDA e-authentication certification and access to FPRS. More detailed instructions for reporting will be included in the USDA federal financial assistance award package.

E. Progress Reporting

The recipient will be responsible for managing and monitoring the progress of the grant project activities and performance. Planning and conference/event grant awardees will submit a mid-term progress report and a final report. Implementation and support service grant awardees will submit progress reports on a quarterly basis throughout the grant term and a final report. The award document will indicate the reporting format and schedule for submitting project performance/progress reports to USDA. Any additional reporting requirements will be identified in the award terms and conditions.

F. Evaluation & Impact

As per authorizing language, as a condition of receiving a grant, grant recipients shall agree to cooperate in an evaluation of the program carried out using grant funds. Upon selection of grant awardees, USDA will provide further guidance and direction regarding evaluation protocols and common indicators. Applicants should expect that evaluation protocols will include both process evaluations (qualitative and quantitative indicators of progress toward the objectives, accomplishment of activities) and outcome evaluations (to determine whether the objectives were met and what impact they had).

XIV. ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATIONS

Debarment and Suspension 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417

A recipient chosen for an award shall comply with the non-procurement debarment and suspension common rule implementing Executive Orders (E.O.) 12549 and 12669, “Debarment and Suspension,” is codified at 2 CFR Part 180 and 2 CFR Part 417. This common rule restricts sub-awards and contracts with certain parties that are debarred, suspended or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in federal assistance programs or activities. The approved grant recipient will be required to ensure that all sub-contractors and sub-grantees are neither excluded nor disqualified under the suspension and debarment rules prior to approving a sub-grant award by checking the System for Award Management (SAM) found at <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>.

Universal Identifier and Central Contractor Registration 2 CFR Part 25

Effective October 1, 2010, all grant applicants must obtain a Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number as a universal identifier for federal financial assistance. Active grant recipients and their direct sub-recipients of a sub-grant award also must obtain a DUNS number. To request a DUNS number visit <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>.

SAM Registration: For applicant organizations that were previously registered in the CCR, relevant applicant information is already in SAM; set up a SAM account as necessary to update any information. To register in SAM, the applicant’s DUNS number, Tax ID Number (TIN), and taxpayer name (as it appears on the applicant’s last tax return) are all required. Registration should take 3-5 days. **Applicants that do not receive confirmation that SAM registration is complete should contact SAM at <https://www.fsd.gov/app/answers/list>.**

FNS may not make an award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with the requirements described in 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 25 to provide a valid DUNS number and maintain an active SAM Account.

Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information 2 CFR Part 170

The Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) of 2006 (Public Law 109–282), as amended by Section 6202 of Public Law 110–252 requires primary grantees of Federal grants and cooperative agreements to report information on sub-grantee obligations and executive compensation. FFATA promotes open government by enhancing the Federal Government’s accountability for its stewardship of public resources. This is accomplished by

making Government information, particularly information on Federal spending, accessible to the general public.

Primary grantees, including State agencies, are required to report actions taken on or after October 1, 2010, that obligates \$25,000 or more in Federal grant funds to first-tier sub-grantees. This information must be reported in the Government-wide FFATA Sub-Award Reporting System (FSRS). In order to access FSRS a current CCR registration is required. A primary grantee and first-tier sub-grantees must also report total compensation for each of its five most-highly compensated executives. Every primary and first-tier grantee must obtain a DUNS number prior to being eligible to receive a grant or sub-grant award. Additional information will be provided to grant recipients upon award.

Duncan Hunter National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2009, Public Law 110-417

Section 872 of this Act requires the development and maintenance of a Federal Government information system that contains specific information on the integrity and performance of covered federal agency contractors and grantees. The Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS) was developed to address these requirements. FAPIIS contains integrity and performance information from the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System, information from the SAM database (formerly CCR), and suspension and debarment information from the EPLS. USDA will review and consider any information about the applicant reflected in FAPIIS when making a judgment about whether an applicant is qualified to receive an award.

Sections 738 and 739 of the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2012 (P.L. 112-55)

Section 738 (Felony Provision) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to any corporation that was convicted (or had an officer or agency of such corporation acting on behalf of the corporation convicted) of a felony criminal violation under any federal or state law within the preceding 24 months, where the awarding agency is aware of the conviction, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation, or such officer or agent, and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interest of the Government.

Section 739 (Tax Delinquency Provision) None of the funds made available by this Act may be used to enter into a contract, memorandum of understanding, or cooperative agreement with, make a grant to, or provide a loan or loan guarantee to, any corporation that (has) any unpaid federal tax liability that has been assessed, for which all judicial and administrative remedies have been exhausted or have lapsed, and that is not being paid in a timely manner pursuant to an agreement with the authority responsible for collecting the tax liability, where the awarding agency is aware of the unpaid tax liability, unless the agency has considered suspension or debarment of the corporation and made a determination that this further action is not necessary to protect the interests of the Government.

XV. CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS AND OTHER GOVERNMENT REQUIREMENTS

This grant will be awarded and administered in accordance with the following regulations and the corresponding OMB Circulars that establish the principles for cost determination found at 2 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Subtitle A, Chapter II: Part 220, Education Institutions (OMB Circular A-21); Part 225, State, Local and Indian Tribal Governments (OMB Circular A-87); and Part 230, Non-Profit Organizations (OMB Circular A-122). Any federal laws, regulations, or USDA directives released after this RFA is posted will be implemented as instructed.

A. Government-wide Regulations

- 2 CFR Part 25: “Universal Identifier and Central Locator Contractor Registration”
- 2 CFR Part 170: “Reporting Sub-award and Executive Compensation Information”
- 2 CFR Part 175: “Award Term for Trafficking in Persons”
- 2 CFR Part 180: “OMB Guidelines to Agencies on Government-wide Debarment and Suspension (Non-Procurement)”
- 2 CFR Part 417: “Office of the Chief Financial Officer: Department of Agriculture Implementation of OMB Guidance on Non-Procurement Debarment and Suspension”
- 41 U.S.C. Section 22 “Interest of Member of Congress”

B. USDA Regulations

- 7 CFR Part 15: “Nondiscrimination”
- 7 CFR Part 3015: “Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations”
- 7 CFR Part 3016: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments”
- 7 CFR Part 3018: “New Restrictions on Lobbying”
- 7 CFR Part 3019: “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and other Non-Profit Organizations”
- 7 CFR Part 3021: “Government-wide Requirements for Drug-Free Workplace (Financial Assistance)”
- 7 CFR Part 3052: “Audits of State, Local Governments, and Non-Profit Organizations”

XVI. RFA APPLICATION CHECKLIST

All proposals submitted under this RFA must contain the applicable elements as described in this announcement. Grant applications must be submitted electronically through www.grants.gov, by **11:59 PM, Eastern Time (ET), April 30, 2014**. The following checklist has been prepared to assist in ensuring that the proposal is complete and in the proper order prior to submission.

	Yes	No
Getting ready to apply		
Have you read the RFA carefully, more than once?		
Have you obtained a Dun and Bradstreet Data Universal Numbering		

System (DUNS) number?		
Have you registered the DUNS number into the System for Award Management (SAM) system?		
Have you registered in grants.gov?		
Preparing the application		
Are you ready to complete the Farm to School Cover Sheet?		
Are you ready to complete the required federal forms?		
Have you addressed, met, and considered any program specific requirements or restrictions?		
Is the project's proposal clearly stated?		
Does your application comply with any format requirements?		
Does it comply with the page limitation?		
Most importantly does your project directly relate to the RFA's objectives and priorities? For example:		
- Is your procurement approach detailed in the narrative?		
- Inclusion of regional products in cafeteria offerings is a priority; have you provided a baseline % of local food used in your school meals and your goal for increasing this?		
- An integrated approach that includes promotional or educational activities along with farm, garden and nutrition-based education is a priority; is this addressed?		
- Creation or further strengthening of community partnerships is a priority; is a clear plan in place?		
Have one or more persons, external to the project, read your proposal and was it clear to them?		
Does the proposed project and budget meet the bona fide needs of the RFA?		
Does it include a line item for the travel required of all fund recipients?		
Is the budget narrative included?		
Is the table of content included?		
Does the budget agree with the calculations shown on the OMB budget form?		
Is the budget in line with the project description?		
Submitting the application		
Have you submitted the table of content, project narrative and budget narrative?		
Have you submitted all the required attachments?		
Have you submitted all your optional attachments?		
Have you submitted the appropriate federal forms as shown under the Required Grant Applicant Forms section of this RFA?		
Once submitted to grants.gov, have you received confirmation that your proposal was both received and accepted?		

XVII. RFA BUDGET NARRATIVE CHECKLIST

This checklist will assist you in completing the budget narrative portion of the application. Please review the checklist to ensure the items below are addressed in the budget narrative.

NOTE: The budget and budget narrative must be in line with the proposal project description (statement of work) bona fine need. USDA reserves the right to request information not clearly addressed.

	YES	NO
Match		
Have you detailed at least a 25% match of the total project cost?		
Have you detailed the source of the match funds?		
Personnel		
Did you include all key employees paid for by this grant under this heading?		
Are employees of the applicant's organization identified by name and position title?		
Did you reflect percentage of time the Project Director will devote to the project in full-time equivalents (FTE)?		
Fringe Benefits		
Did you include your organization's fringe benefit amount along with the basis for the computation?		
Did you list the type of fringe benefits to be covered with federal funds?		
Travel		
Are travel expenses itemized? For example origination/destination points, number and purpose of trips, number of staff traveling, mode of transportation and cost of each trip.		
Are the attendee objectives and travel justifications included in the narrative?		
Is the basis for the lodging estimates identified in the budget? For example include excerpt from travel regulations.		
Did you include the mandatory travel to one face-to-face meeting?		
Equipment		
Is the need for the equipment justified in the narrative?		
Are the types of equipment, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased listed in the budget?		
Is the basis for the cost per item or other basis of computation stated in the budget?		
Supplies		
Are the types of supplies, unit costs, and the number of items to be purchased reflected in the budget?		
Is the basis for the costs per item or other basis of computation stated?		

Contractual: (USDA reserves the right to request information on all contractual awards and associated costs after the contract is awarded.)		
Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost for a contract or sub-grant expense(s) shown on the budget?		
A justification for all Sole-source contracts must be provided in the budget narrative prior to approving this identified cost.		
Other		
Consultant Services – Has the bona fide need been clearly identified in the project description to justify the cost shown on the budget? The following information must be provided in the justification: description of service and an itemized list of all direct cost and fees, number of personnel including the position title (specialty and specialized qualifications as appropriate to the costs), number of estimated hours X hourly wages, and all expenses and fees directly related to the proposed services to be rendered to the project.		
For all other line items listed under the “Other” heading, list all items to be covered under this heading along with the methodology on how the applicant derived the costs to be charged to the program.		
Indirect Costs		
Has the applicant obtained a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) from a federal agency? If yes, a copy of the most recent and signed negotiated rate agreement must be provided along with the application.		
If no negotiated agreement exists, the basis and the details of the indirect costs to be requested should be reflected in the budget.		
If no indirect costs are requested, please write “None Requested.”		

XVII. AGENCY CONTACT

Applicants should submit all questions related to this RFA via email to the grant support team at farmtoschool@fns.usda.gov, or by contacting the support team at (202) 720-0092.

APPENDIX

Introduction

Module 1: Farm to School Team

This module is meant to help you build and organize the team that will guide and implement your farm to school program; along with the “Vision, Goals, and Context” module, it will form the foundation of your farm to school implementation plan. Working through the module, you will be encouraged to define the roles of, and learn more about, your committed team members and advisors; determine what other types of members will make your team stronger; establish a structure for your team and the meetings you hold; come up with a preliminary meeting schedule; and explore existing resources that will help you form an effective group.

RECOMMENDED READING AND RESOURCES

Following is a list of resources you may find helpful for assembling and growing your farm to school team and leading farm to school planning meetings.

- » [Farm to School: Assemble a Team](#), from University of Minnesota Extension – Tips for foodservice directors on building a farm to school team, including a video and many examples.
- » [Vermont Farm to School: A Guide for Farm to School Community Action Planning](#), from Vermont Food Education Every Day (VT FEED) – Detailed information on forming a farm to school team, facilitating farm to school meetings, and developing a community action plan.
- » [Healthy School Toolkit \(see Chapter 3: Team Up to Implement Your School Nutrition Policy\)](#), from the Food Trust – While this chapter of the toolkit is focused on building a School Health Council to advise schools on matters of health policy, many of the same ideas will apply to building a farm to school team.
- » [Food Hub’s Knowledge Base \(see the “Getting Started” section\)](#), from EcoTrust – This library of farm to school guidance is updated regularly and includes user ratings.

Farm to School Team

Module 1

BACKGROUND

{When was your farm to school team established and by whom? What activities has the group participated in to date (i.e. at the end of your initial planning period)?}

ALREADY COMMITTED MEMBERS

{What are the names, titles, and roles of people who have already committed to being part of your farm to school team?}

[Member #1 Name]

{What is this person's title? Does he or she belong to an organization? Does he or she have any decision-making power? What role will he or she play on the team?}

Tip: You might also note other relevant roles that committee members play in the school, the community, or in their personal lives, as well as any helpful skills they might have. Does this member serve on any other committees? Is he or she the parent of a former student (in addition to being, say, the school nurse)? Does he or she love gardening or have fundraising experience?

For example:

Name: Shauna James

Title: Johnson School Vice Principal

Committee role: Farm to School Administrative Liaison

Other committees: School Wellness Committee, Curriculum Review Committee

Other information: former health teacher; avid home cook; grown daughter is a farmer in a nearby town

ADVISORS

{Outside of the team, what people or groups will you look to for guidance and assistance? What are the names, titles, and roles of people who have agreed to advise your committee on specific matters on an as-needed basis?}

Tip: Your advisory committee needn't necessarily be formal, but formalizing advisory roles might make the people who you're hoping to get some specific advice or help from more invested in your program.

NEEDED MEMBERS AND ADVISORS

{What specific people or categories of people would you like to have on your farm to school team or advisory committee but have not yet received a commitment from? Who will be responsible for recruiting these new members? What are your expectations for these members? What role(s) will they play?}

For example: Some ideas for the types of people you might recruit to be on your team or advisory committee include:

*School food service representatives,
teachers,*

*students,
school administrators (especially the school principal or vice principal),
school board members,
parents and grandparents,
food producers (including farmers, ranchers, and fishermen)
school nurses,
guidance counselors,
staff members of non-profit organizations,
Master Gardeners,
researchers,
school maintenance staff members,
local chefs,
state agency farm to school coordinator,
National Farm to School Network state lead,
health care professionals,
extension agents,
PTA/PTO representatives,
members of the local media,
the school or district communications director,
the school or district curriculum director,
and other schools or districts that have farm to school programs.*

DETAILS & LOGISTICS

Structure

{How is your team structured? Are you a subcommittee of a wellness committee or a food policy committee? Do you have sub-committees? Is there a team lead? Is there a cap on the number of members? Are members appointed, invited, elected, or nominated? Is there a leadership committee? Are all members of the team permanent, or do some serve for a specific period of time (such as the school year)?}

Name

{What will you call your farm to school team?}

For example: Some popular names include Farm to School Coordinating Committee, Farm to School Organizing Committee, School Nutrition Action Committee (SNAC), and Farm to School Steering Committee. Choose a name that reflects the team's scope. If the team will address issues broader than the term "farm to school" encompasses, its name should reflect that.

Responsibilities & Power

{What are the functions and responsibilities of the farm to school team? Does the team, or do members of the team, have decision-making power? If not, by what means can the team's ideas and recommendations be realized?}

For example: The types of activities a farm to school team might be responsible for include strategic planning, implementation, community outreach, regular reporting to specific people or entities, and fundraising.

Relationship building

{Do the various team members, [especially foodservice staff, administrators, and teachers] work together often? If not, what activities will build relationships, understanding, and trust between members?}

Meetings

{Who is the team accountable to? How often does the team meet? Where are meetings held? Are meetings open to the public? Will meetings be facilitated by a member of the team, or an external partner?}

Meeting Schedule

{What is your preliminary meeting schedule for the duration of your near-term implementation period?}